

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope this communication finds you well and looking forward to a wonderful holiday break.

To help prepare for 2024, I wanted to explain the new State-wide Mobile Phone Policy that you may have heard about in the media.

Student use of mobile devices

From the beginning of Term 1 2024, all Queensland state school students must keep their mobile phones switched off and 'away for the day' during school hours.

Notifications on wearable devices, such as smartwatches, must be switched off so that phone calls, messages and other notifications cannot be sent or received during school hours.

The decision to implement a consistent, state-wide approach to putting mobile phones away during the school day is based on the advice of Ms Cheryl Vardon AO, former Queensland Family and Children's Commissioner, who completed an independent review of Queensland's approach to mobile phones.

'Away for the day' will support schools to maintain a strong focus on educational achievement, and student wellbeing and engagement by:

- providing optimal learning and teaching environments
- encouraging increased face-to-face social interactions between students
- promoting the health and wellbeing of students through increased social interaction and physical activity
- reducing the potential for students to be exposed to the negative impacts of the digital world, resulting from unsafe or inappropriate technology use.

If students choose to bring their phone to school, they must have it switched off and in their bags during school hours. Smart watches and other wearable devices can still be worn with notifications switched off.

How this State-wide policy will work at Benowa is as follows:

- Students must have their phones switched off and in their bags.
- Phones will stay in their bags, out of sight for the day and they will not be able to send or receive calls and messages.
- Students will be responsible for their phones during the school day.
- Essentially, no student should have their phones out during school hours.

Please find attached the Benowa High Mobile Phone Policy.

Frequently asked questions:

- What if I need to contact my child? *Please contact the Front Office.*
- What if my child requires access to their phone for medical reasons? *Exemptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Please contact the relevant Head of Department – Wellbeing in the first instance.*

- What about school excursions and camps? *This policy also applies to all off-campus school activities.*
- How will my child pay for items at the canteen? *We recommend providing your child with a debit card for tap and go.*

I am seeking support from our parents and caregivers as we navigate this change. How can you help?

- Have a conversation with your child/ren about the mobile phone strategy and policy to prepare them for this change.
- Support the implementation of our Benowa SHS policy by using one of our other communication applications including Compass, email or a simple phone call to our front office.
- Remind your child to report to a staff member in the first instance if they become unwell or experience a problem during the school day.
- Ensure your child has access to the school Compass portal on their BYOD device.

Please find below links to support and resources you might find helpful:

- [eSafety Parents](#) - learn about online safety challenges, and how to help your child have positive online experiences.
- [Good habits start young](#)
- [Is your child ready for a phone or social media](#)
- Buying a [smartphone](#) or [wearable device](#) for your child
- [Online safety basics](#)
- [ParentLine](#) – a support service for parents and carers that includes a range of helpful articles, such as *Addiction to Technology – the Warning Signs and Social Media and Safety.*

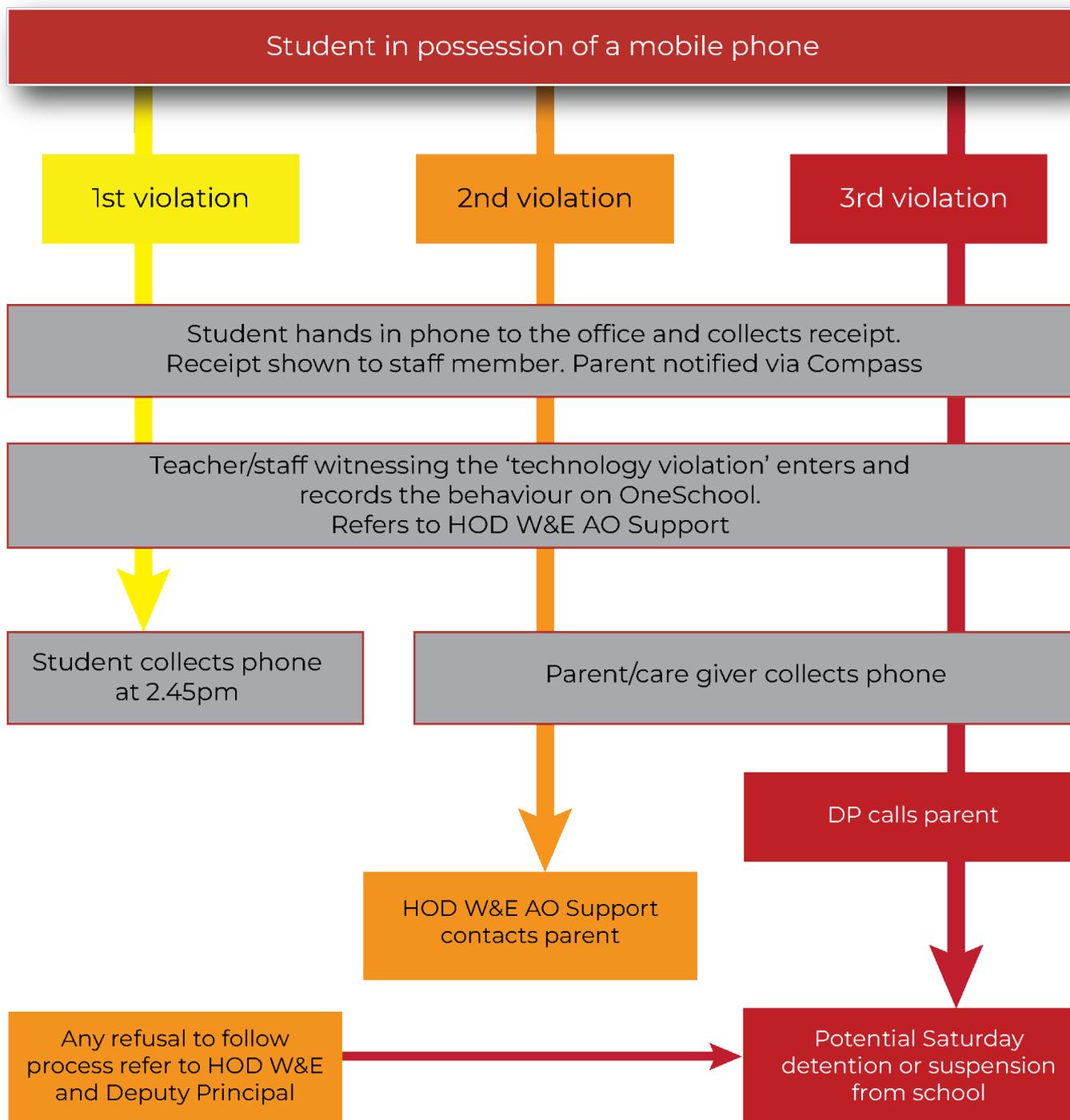
Thank you for your support and if you have any concerns or questions, please don't hesitate to contact myself or the relevant year level Deputy Principal.

Best wishes for the final weeks of Term 4.

Kind regards



Alison Fahlbusch
Principal



Note: This process resets every term.